HIGH VOLUME, HIGH CORRELATIONS: NYPD MAKES BIG GAINS WITH NIBIN

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New York City Police Department began using NIBIN in July of 1995. The department images all firearms evidence from crime scenes, and testfires all recovered firearms and images the resulting bullets and cartridge casings. This comprehensive approach to evidence entry increases the successful correlations found, because more images are available to search against. As of May 2001, the New York City system contained entries for 42,800 entered casings and 27,300 bullets, and these 70,100 total images have yielded over 590 high correlation "hits" that have resulted in successful identifications. One recent murder case is an example of the successes possible when large volumes of firearms data are available for correlation in an IBIS system.

On December 21, 2000, a city resident was shot during an armed robbery. The suspect escaped, but a cartridge casing was recovered at the scene. It was imaged into NIBIN at the New York Police Department's firearms laboratory.

On December 26, 2000, a small grocery store in the city was robbed, and two victims shot to death. The evidence recovered at this scene was also imaged into NIBIN. The high correlation score between the evidence in this double murder and in the previous armed robbery highlighted a potential link between the two crimes.

On April 2, 2001, an armed gunman robbed a victim at gunpoint in the street. The victim was not shot, but was robbed of jewelry and cash. Before the robber could escape, he was apprehended, and he was found to be on active state parole after having served part of his sentence on a prior murder conviction.

In the course of the arrest, the gun used in the robbery was seized from the suspect. The weapon was a Taurus 9 mm semi-automatic handgun from which the serial number had been removed. The weapon was testfired and the bullet and cartridge casing entered into NIBIN. The resulting high correlation score linked the recovered firearm to the double murder at the grocery store, the armed robbery, and two additional shooting cases. When firearms examiners examined the evidence, they made a positive identification of this gun as the weapon used in the four crimes. The firearms laboratory is currently working to restore the serial number on the gun, and the ATF New York Regional Crime Gun Center is working jointly with New York City Police to obtain more information on the gun.

One gun was linked and then positively identified to four shooting cases and the final armed robbery. Follow-up investigative work linked the arrested defendant to four of the firearm-identified cases. The initial high correlation provided by IBIS demonstrates the ability of the computerized imaging system to link multiple crimes.